

# *10th International Conference of Panel Data Users in Switzerland*

## *Workshop - Socio-economic inequality and mobility*

### **Title**

*Inheritances in European Families: Between Expectations and Reality*

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### **Abstract**

Support among family generations is, along with the intergenerational transmission of education and concomitant unequal opportunities and insecurities, an important characteristic of family relationships in contemporary societies. While previous research on intergenerational monetary transfers as part of functional solidarity has shown that family generations are strongly connected with one another, relatively little is yet known about the influence of social inequality on intergenerational solidarity. The paper addresses this research gap and examines the determinants of intergenerational cash flows regarding expecting and receiving inheritances from a transnational and time-related perspective and at three different levels: individual, family, and society. The analyses focus on the following questions: (a) who expects to receive such a transfer in the future, (b) who has actually inherited money and valuables, (c) are there connections between expecting and receiving such monetary transfers, and (d) can we find variations between (European) countries?

The analyses are based on a two-wave panel design of the first (2004/5) respectively second (2006/7) and sixth (2015) respectively seventh (2017) wave of the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE), including ten European countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The findings prove that inheritances are an important feature of intergenerational support. However, the situation varies widely across countries, both concerning expecting and receiving inheritances. Moreover, the multilevel analyses indicate class-specific patterns for expecting and receiving such assets and thus highlight the perpetuation of social inequalities over generations. We find strong connections between intergenerational family solidarity and social inequality. Respondents from higher social classes expect inheritances more often, and the upper classes are also much more likely to receive such transfers later on.